

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 21

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

ABSENCE OF QUEBEC PREMIER FROM FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, the federal-provincial conference on aboriginal peoples opened today. I should think that everyone is aware that the Premier of Quebec has no intention of attending the conference. Mr. Speaker, it is important to remind Canadians that the Premier of Quebec has chosen to stay away from the conference because the federal Government and the Prime Minister of Canada have failed to understand that settling the claims of the provincial Government would make it a lot easier for Quebec to sign the Constitution.

It must be remembered that the federal Government has not shown open-mindedness with respect to Quebec's claim concerning the power to select its immigrants and financial compensation under established programs.

Mr. Speaker, all Members of this House ought to know that, should the conference fail and the Prime Minister attempt to shift the blame to the Quebec Government, the person responsible for the absence of the Quebec Premier at the conference is the Prime Minister of Canada.

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BEAUCE REGION

QUALITY OF SCHOOLS

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, recently, Radio-Canada broadcast a series of programs on the public school system in Quebec. I want to register my indignation and that of the members of the Chaudière regional school commission at the lack of objectivity reflected in these programs. Mr. Speaker, I think it is unconscionable that the network should select certain facts and events to give an unnecessarily negative picture of the *polyvalentes*, the high schools across Quebec, and especially in Beauce. We have some excellent high schools, and we are not alone. Radio-Canada has no business casting doubts on the quality of the curriculum and the services offered, and on the behaviour of our students.

In Beauce, we are proud of the standards of all our high schools and of the quality of both administrators and students. Our teachers, who are a conscientious and dedicated group, deserve our support, Mr. Speaker, and I think that applies to many teachers in Quebec. We have suffered as a result of the bad publicity generated by these broadcasts which seemed to

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generalize on the basis of just one situation. Our teachers and students in Quebec and in Beauce deserve our continuing support and encouragement.

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[English]

IMMIGRATION

FAMILY REUNIFICATION—GOVERNMENT PROMISES

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, the Government has ignored two promises it made last year for family reunification of immigrants. First, it promised to put information packets in all immigration offices. A sponsor could pick up a packet at an office in Canada with an application form and explanation of immigration rules to send to the relative overseas, or the relative overseas could pick up a packet at the visa office there. This would have saved staff time and speeded up service, yet the Government did not do it. Why?

Second, the Government promised to reduce overseas processing time after the file is complete to six weeks for spouse or minor child, and to 12 weeks for other family members. Still there is no sign of progress. Why?

These are promises made by the Minister of State for Immigration (Mr. Weiner) last October after the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration studied and consulted with immigration officials and tabled these recommendations in June.

By ignoring these promises to immigrants and Parliament, the Minister increases the frustration of immigrants, which the Government then tries to blame on refugees.

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TRADE

TAX ON LUMBER EXPORTS—EFFECT OF EXCHANGE VALUE OF DOLLAR

Mr. Aurèle Gervais (Timmins—Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of urgency to the residents of my riding engaged in the softwood lumber industry. The Ontario Lumber Manufacturers' Association in a brief to the legislative committee on Bill C-37 of the House of Commons raised two problems which I feel the Government should address immediately.

One is the rising value of the Canadian dollar which, since the agreement was signed, has turned the 15 per cent export tax into an approximate 20 per cent tax. I would suggest that the value of the Canadian dollar be fixed for the purpose of this tax as of December 30, 1986, the day the Canada-U.S. agreement was signed, and that the 15 per cent tax be tied to the value of the Canadian dollar on a sliding scale.